

TIMBER HOUSES IN TIMBER DISTRICTS.

We introduce the illustration which accompanies this article, because we are enamoured of this species of building, as applicable to many districts of the United Kingdom; we are astonished, in fact, that not more is done in timber-growing districts, where young trees would be available in procuring this agreeable class of dwelling, not only for the farmhouse and the superior class of cottage, but for the occasional retreat of the wealthy, and their occupation at particular seasons. The shade and shelter, the unique and agreeable, the varied and picturesque, are all combined with economy as to the raw material, advantage as to the use of home products, and an improving exercise in his craft for the ingenious and tasteful workman. Those who have been in Germany and seen the delightful class of edifices of this character which present themselves to you at every turn, will feel with us a restlessness or an impatience to enjoy the charm and comfort of such things at home, or to see others enjoying them; and to do our part towards it, we have made choice of the illustration and extract herewith given.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSTRUCTION.

The foundations are to be built of stone or brickwork, and carried up two feet above the level

of the terrace; the walls containing the flues and the chimney-stacks are also to be of stone or brickwork. The platform on which the terrace is raised is to be formed of the earth dug out of the foundations; and after being properly rammed and allowed time to settle, it is to be paved with flat tiles. The railings surrounding the terrace are to be formed by wooden posts driven firmly into the platform at the angles, and the intermediate spaces are to be filled in with roughly turned balusters, coped with a light wooden rail. The balusters are to be supported by wooden brackets, as shown in the elevation; and the balusters of the outside stairs are to correspond with those of the terrace. The walls above the solid stone or brickwork are to be framed of wood in the Swiss manner, and covered with boards both outside and inside. The roof is to be covered with shingles or with tiles, and the projecting eaves are to be supported by brackets and by a continuation of the common rafters; the projections over the gable ends are also to be supported by solid wooden brackets. The tops of the chimney shafts are to be covered with tarred boards, or with thin flag stones, and the smoke is to escape at the lateral openings, as shown in the elevation. The ornaments on the roof are to be of very light cast-iron, painted on an oak colour. The windows may be common sashes, hung in the usual way, or they may be framed in the Italian or Swiss manner, and hinged so as to open inwards. Its graceful appearance, fig. 1326, reminds us of the very beautiful wine-house and pleasure-garden in the Swiss style at Silberberg, near Stuttgart.—*London's Encyclopaedia.*



WOOD PAVEMENTS.

It occurs by an odd coincidence that the first example of wood pavements to which we have had access for the purpose of illustration is Mr. Stead's patent—the first, we believe in the list of patents, and the first laid down in the metropolis. His patent was taken out in May, 1838, and the first specimen laid down under it was in December of the same year. We remember how it was viewed, and how little was thought, at the time, of the probability of the extending of the application of wood pavements. Indeed, to use the words of the *Polytechnic Journal* for the present month, in a long and interesting article on this subject, "that which is now hailed as one of the most valuable improvements of the day, was then (only five years ago), declared monstrous, and the conception of a madman!"—the experiment, too, was a most unfavourable one, and this we have to remark of all new inventions—they are generally put to the test under the most disadvantageous, not to say unfair circumstances. All the experience and skill acquired by habit of the practitioner under an old mode, is brought into competition with the inexperienced and unpractised hand of the inventor of the novelty, and his plan is unjustly estimated or condemned for circumstances that have nothing to do with its real merits or demerits. So in this wood paving experiment in Oxford-street. A certain extent was marked out for the trial of various modes of paving. Granite blocks in various modes (we are not sure whether macadamising also was not included), asphalt, and wood paving, and this wood paving was Mr. Stead's system. The essential, however, of a concrete substratum, or at any rate a well-consolidated one, was not secured—some mistake, too, of the surveyor, in giving the level, has been adverted to, which being suddenly discovered, caused an sudden alteration, before the blocks were laid down; and this

deranging the prepared base, added to the disadvantages, under which Mr. Stead's plan was tried. However, it was the hexagonal block, as shown in our illustration, the only alteration since made from this diagram being that the blocks are not now chamfered or bevelled off at the edges, but by a triangular groove or channel across the centre and solid of each block.



Mr. Stead, it should be observed, is not entirely the original inventor of this plan, it being in part a suggestion in the shape of a communication from abroad; but probably it may owe all its practicability to him, since we learn his character to have been that of a merchant of considerable enterprise, engaged in the timber trade, and we are well convinced that he is a man of great natural talent and judgment in mechanical matters. He appears, like all first inventors, or nearly all, to have had most of the "brunt of the battle" of opposition to bear, but he still stands firm to the conviction of his own superiority, both as to the plan he adopts and the precedence he has over all others, whose plans he says are included in his. We believe a hearing is about to be had before the Privy Council on his petition, setting forth that he is the first inventor, and holds the ground to the exclu-

sion of all subsequent comers; we may be this place notice that from some defect in his original specification, he was compelled to take out another, and also to repair the defect by an Act of Parliament specially obtained for the purpose. These matters are worthy of note, and exhibit him as a man of extraordinary perseverance, and one that few or small difficulties would not easily daunt.

We have collected from Mr. Stead and from Mr. Blackie (who has ably favoured us with every information we sought for) such particulars of the merits of the plan, as entertained by them, as will serve to shew by recapitulation how it stands in comparison with the other plans that will obtain succeeding notice. In the first place, they dwell strongly on the superiority of the vertical position of the grain of the wood over the inclined in respect of wear upon the fibre.

2nd. On the economy of conversion, as it is termed, from the round timber; the hexagon being, as might be said, a mere modification of the natural circle of growth.

3rd. The compact fitting of block with block, and the grip or collaring which each receives from the ale surrounding and close-fitting blocks.

4th. The simplicity of laying down, and consequent economy on this score.

5th. The easy method of extracting any single block or series, and laying down again; on this head, however, Mr. Stead's other remarks should have place; he says, "That the strong sifting or coating of sand which he applies over a newly-laid pavement very quickly finds its way into the joints between each block, that there becomes a concrete, adhering firmly, and welding and binding the blocks, so much so that until a machine was introduced to hoist the blocks up vertically, they were obliged in cases of repair to split them with a mallet and chisel to make a commencement to raise them; since then, however, this vertical lifting machine has been applied, and so tedious and slow is the binding power of the sand lodged in the joints, as well as the tightness from expansion of the blocks, and the close fittings of the hexagon, that a power equal to at least that of raising ten tons—occasionally almost twenty tons—is necessary to extract the single block; with this, power, however, the method is simple, there being on dowels or levers to cut through, or any defect arising from the absence of such on laying down again, as must be the case, more or less, with any plan where dowels, &c. form a part of the construction."

Mr. Stead's, or perhaps Mr. Blackie's, motive for changing the mode of chamfering was founded on this reason, that inasmuch as the weakest part of the section of round timber is near the outer circles, and the strongest necessarily in the heart line, he runs his groove across the latter in preference to chamfering round the edge of the former. We have thus stated fairly, we trust, all the points in favour of Mr. Stead's patent; we may add that it has been extensively used, particularly in Manchester, and that a beautiful sweep of it has been lately put down in the Strand; it is undeniably a very superior specimen of wood paving; the testimony of the *Polytechnic Journal* is strong in its favour, and Colonel Jackson, who has written much and attended largely to the subject, appears in his writings to give a decided preference to Mr. Stead's plan, and we believe him to be without bias in the matter. All this we have stated, but reserve our own opinions to the summing-up, when we have examined in the same manner the other plans before the public; in the meantime we shall also have to have the opinion of our readers, in which we attach considerable weight.

NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD.—The original beautiful timber roof is to be restored to the hall of the college, and the work will be commenced forthwith, the sum required to effect this desirable improvement having been already raised.

It is said of the late Mr. Telford that, having to appear before the Duke of York relative to an account which that celebrated engineer had presented against the department over which his royal highness presided, he was addressed in these words:—"Mr. Telford, your charge is very high, very high—ten guineas a day! why it is the pay of a field-marshal."—"Yes," said Mr. Telford, "it may be true, but your royal highness will please to bear in mind that I am a field-marshal in my profession."